

ROTHMANS Isthmian League amateurs Wycombe Wanderers, face one of the biggest ever games in the 79 year history tomorrow (Saturday) when they take on Peterborough United in the second round of the F.A. Cup.

Wanderers will be bidding for history for they have never reached the third round stage, when the First and Second Division clubs come into the competition. In 1959 they lost 5-1 at Vicarage Road, Watford in front of 24,000 people and then in 1962-63 they slumped 3-1 at Gravesend and Northfleet 3-1. Dave Thomas scored the only goal from the penalty spot.

Delving even further back into the record books, it is 41 years since Wanderers met professional opposition at home in the F.A. Cup and this will be their last chance in this competition as amateurs.

In each of their two other second round appearances, Wycombe can hardly have been so beset with injury problems. Indeed, considering the number of key players out of tomorrow's match, their success this season is little short of brilliant.

TWO MORE INJURED

One player after another has been struck by injuries this season, including the Blues centre forward Keith Searle and international full back Derek Gamblin. Two more are doubtful tomorrow — Rob Williams and Dylan Evans.

Manager Brian Lee declared earlier in the week that full back Williams was almost certainly out of the match. However, after training on Tuesday, Williams' groin strain suffered no ill effects and he has now a 50-50 chance of playing.

Striker Dylan Evans sustained a gash on the shin when making his debut for Wales against England in the Amateur International last Saturday at Merthyr. Dylan came on for the last 20 minutes and didn't discover his injury until after the game. He had three stitches inserted in the wound and should be fit for tomorrow.

If Williams is unfit, Tony Brothers is likely to take over the full back role. Brothers met with a good deal of success in this position against Newport County in the last round — even though he had never played there in his life before. It was noticeable to be switched to full back in Wycombe's recent

friendly against Aveley in the second half.

Possible substitute tomorrow is young Tony Price, who has played only a couple of games for Wanderers and recently signed for Leicester City. Tony has been playing for City's A and reserve teams and is soon to represent the England Youth team against Orient.

Both teams have been looking at each others' strength and weaknesses in recent weeks. Blues boss Brian Lee saw Peterborough beat Hartlepool 2-0 while two United men watched Wycombe's 2-2 friendly with Aveley. Mr. Lee was highly impressed by the Peterborough set-up. He thought their main strength was upfront, namely John Cozens, Jim Hall and Tommy Robson. Their main attacking play was to concentrate in getting round the opponents defence and knocking balls into the middle for Hall, their six foot centre forward.

Comparing the Posh with

Newport, Brian said, "There was no comparison. Peterborough were completely different and far more professional. They are a pro' club and they will have left no stone unturned for this match."

As for Wycombe's chances, he added, "All I can hope is that we do our best. If we play as well as we did in the second half against Newport I'll be thrilled."

NO ILLUSIONS

Peterborough, with a history steeped in cup conquests, are under no illusions about their task — Wycombe's first found win over Newport underlining the potential dangers facing them. But United, while respecting their opponents, remain confident they can rise above the problems Wycombe are likely to present on their sloping pitch.

Manager Noel Cantwell has prepared his players just as thoroughly as if the venue was Leeds. And there will be no

question of complacency. Although the training schedule has been normal, Cantwell did go to the extent of borrowing a nearby village ground, possessing a pronounced slope, to condition his players.

"The sloping pitch is one of our biggest worries," admitted Cantwell. "But I believe we have enough character, skill and experience to nullify this threat."

But Cantwell feels Wycombe will prove a tougher obstacle to remove than championship rivals Colchester in the last round. "I have the greatest respect for manager Brian Lee, who I met on courses at Lilleshall," he said.

"I know he is a good coach and I gather his team is well organised. They are probably capable of holding their own in some professional leagues. I am expecting them to be as good as Colchester."

Cantwell, out to avoid the humiliation Brighton suffered at

the hands of Walton recently, remembers how troublesome amateurs Bishop's Stortford proved at this stage of the competition last season.

Peterborough were held to a 2-2 draw at Bishop's Stortford after leading 2-0 and had difficulty in winning the replay 3-1.

But United have considerably strengthened their side since then, although Cantwell reckons Wycombe will prove a more difficult test than Stortford.

Peterborough have only once suffered defeat at the hands of a non-league club since joining the Football League 13 years ago. That was against Northern Premier League club Wigan Athletic three years ago.

Latest news from Peterborough is that they have two players suffering from minor injuries — full back Jeff Lee and Paul Walker, midfielder. Both should be fit, however.

The generator used by Wycombe for their training on Tuesday and Thursday could be in action to provide floodlights tomorrow. If the light gets bad, it will be possible to use the generator, but Wanderers feel this is unlikely and the kick off time is still set for 1.45 p.m.

Television sports personality Jimmy Hill was down at Loakes Park last night (Thursday) and interviewed several of the players and officials for the Nationwide programme. The film is scheduled for tonight (Friday) at 6 p.m.

Spectators are advised to arrive early tomorrow, particularly those with tickets. Gates will be open at 12.15. There will be a limited turnstile entry and the gates will be closed as soon as the limit of 15,000 has been reached.



TONY BROTHERS
... full back switch



ROB WILLIAMS
... rated 50-50



DYLAN EVANS
... three stitches



JIM HALL
... United centre forward